DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 309 494 CS 506 767

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TITLE Live Interviews Conducted at the 1988 GOP Convention by ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN.

PUB DATE 13 Aug 89

NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (72nd, Washington, DC, August 10-13, 1989).

PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Broadcast Television; *Cable Television; *Interviews; Mass Media Role; *News Reporting; Politics; *Presidential Campaigns (United States)

IDENTIFIERS *Live Broadcasts; News Sources; Political Party Conventions; *Republican Party; Television Networks

ABSTRACT

To compare broadcast coverage of the 1984 and 1988 GOP Conventions, a study asked three research questions: (1) Did live interviews represent the same number of sources interviewed during broadcasts of the 1988 GOP convention by the four networks as during the 1984 convention? (2) Did 1988 live interview sources have the same distribution with respect to race, sex, and status, as 1984 GOP interview sources? and (3) How much success did floor reporters at the convention have in getting the sources they selected for their live interviews on the air? Broadcasts of the convention were recorded on videotape from on-air signals from New Orleans' three network-affiliated stations (ABC, CBS, and NBC) and from a cable system for CNN. The interviews analyzed were the population of live interviews broadcast during the GOP convention by all four networks. Results indicated that, overall, the networks did not act significantly differently in selection of sources for live interviews based on the race or sex of the news source (sources were overwhelmingly white males), but that they did act differently as to selection of sources based on status, with congresspersons and senators the largest percentage of sources, and with a trend toward more interviews of professional campaign staff members. Results also indicated that CNN floor reporters felt they had good success in getting sources they deemed to be newsworthy on the air. (Ten tables of data are included.) (SR)

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ED309494

Radio-TV Journalism Division
"Network News: Something Old, New, Borrowed, Blue"
AEJMC Convention, Washington, DC, August 13, 1989

LIVE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED AT THE 1988 GOP CONVENTION

BY ABC, CBS, NBC, AND CNN

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Live Interviews Conducted at the 1988 GOP Convention by ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN

Presidential nominating conventions have been labelled by many as dinosaurs of the American political party system. Once they actually were the sites where presidential nominees were decided in smoke-filled back rooms.

In recent years they have become well-staged media events that stick closely to to-the-minute scripts designed to present to American voters a highly polished view of party unity and spirit. Rarely is anything truly controversial on the advance agenda.

Republican conventions have often followed the script in which the front-running nominee is handed the party's nomination without a fight -- or discussion -- in the convention hall.

Earlier studies by this researcher and others have examined television coverage of the 1952, 1972, 1976, 1984, and 1988 Democratic Conventions and the 1984 Republican Convention.[1]

The studies that have dealt with Democratic Conventions have revealed networks' patterns for selecting news sources for live interviews -- by race, sex and status of sources -- and the interview content and direction of that content in three conventions.[2]

The study that focused on network coverage of the 1984 Republican Convention[3] has offered similar information as to live interview sources, but there has been no other quantative study of another complete GOP convention to compare it to.[4]

The purpose of this study is to replicate a study of analysis of the 1984 GOP Convention[5] to determine the following: Was broadcast coverage alike in quantity among the four major networks participating in 1988? Was it similar to what had happened in 1984? And, was the pool of sources interviewed live in 1988 similar to sources interviewed at the 1984 GOP convention?

To achieve these purposes, two specific hypotheses were formed:

1. Were the same number of sources interviewed during broadcasts of the 1988 GOP convention by the four networks as during the 1984 GOP convention live interviews?

2. Were 1988 GOP live interview sources the same, as to race, sex, and status, as 1984 GOP interview sources?

A third qualitative area was also included in the analysis of 1988 broadcasts:

3. How much success did floor reporters at the convention have in getting the sources they selected for their live interviews on the air?

METHOD

Broadcasts of the convention were recorded on video tape from on-air signals from New Orleans' three network-affiliated stations and from a cable system for CNN. The interviews analyzed are the population of interviews broadcast during the GOP convention by all four networks.

Operational definitions. An interview was defined as any on-camera network segment between a network news person and a single non-network news source conducted on a real-time basis. Live-on-tape and edited, taped interviews were not counted, nor were

network news personnel's reports and summations counted where there was only on-tape interview material and a reporter's opening and closing standups, but no live news source.

This somewhat limits the concept of interview, but is necessary to continue an operational system begun in 1972 when only audio tape was readily available for home recording purposes.

It was hypothesized then that with an ability only to hear an interview, the live interview in which the reporter and news source were only talking heads would be visually constant. Live and taped combination interviews aired in 1972 included taped footage of the riots of the 1968 Chicago convention and were deemed visually important.

Different sources was a definition that describes an individual who is counted one time as a particular network source, no matter how many times that individual is interviewed on that same network.

For example, Bush Campaign Director Lee Atwater was interviewed three times on ABC, three times on CBS, twice on NBC, and five times on CNN during the convention week. He was counted as one different source once for each of the four networks.

Sources were assigned to an expanded category system to classify news sources as to their status. In prior convention years, dating to 1972's examination, an 11-point system was sufficient,[6] but there was a novel situation in 1988 in which former Cabinet Members and a former President were interviewed which seemed to call for a 12th category: Heritage. The category system was increased to the 12 categories.

The news source status categories included: 1. Presidential Candidates; 2. Vice Presidential Candidates; 3. Family Members of a Presidential or Vice Presidential Candidate; 4. Convention Officials; 5. Staff Members of Candidates; 6. Members of Congress; 7. Elected Officials, Non-federal; 8. Heritage; 9. Labor Leaders or Representatives; 10. Advocates; 11. Rank-and-File delegates; 12. Unidentifieds and Others.

If a source could be classified into more than one category he or she would be classified only once, and then into the category with the lowest number. For example, a U.S. senator who was also a convention delegate and a campaign manager for a candidate would have been classified into Category 5, Staff Member.

Category Reliability: A primary coder coded the universe of the 1988 Convention interviews from the four networks while reviewing all tapes. Coefficients for a secondary coder for the networks were all above .93.

To answer the third research question about how much success floor correspondents had in getting the news sources they selected on the air, this researcher envisioned attending the Republican Convention and having daily access to either reporters of the production control trailer where directors made the decisions about who did and who did not get on the air.

A written request to the executive vice president for News at Cable News Network, Ed Turner, resulted in an invitation from CNN to attend the convention as a guest observer. Not until the Wednesday prior to the Aug. 15 opening of the convention was it determined that the limitations of the observation would be

restricted to the newsroom below the anchor booth on the convention floor.

There was no room in the production trailer, the researcher was told. And, the director, political director, and convention manager all said they were made uneasy by the presence of an outsider and did not wish one present in the trailer, even if there had been room.

Ultimately, data were gathered from the four principal floor correspondents, Tom Mintier, Gene Randall, Frank Sesno, and Mary Tillotson, and the podium reporter, Charles Bierbauer, face-to-face during the week, usually prior to the start of a convention session. After the two sessions on Monday, the researcher contacted each reporter, informed them of the purpose and scope of the research and asked them to participate. Each was told that the ultimate question to be answered was: Were there any news sources you deemed newsworthy that did not get on the air, for whatever reason?

The five CNN reporters were cooperative and candid during the week. After the final session, information was not collected directly from the reporters, because of logistical problems. Instead, letters were written to each asking for the answer to the above question with regard to the Thursday night acceptance speech session.

The information collected was qualitative in nature and is reported below in that way.

RESULTS

1988 vs. 1984. The total number of live interviews aired at the Republican Convention by ABC, CBS, and NBC increased from

131 in 1984 to 172 in 1988. CNN, which began its convention coverage in 1984, was not analyzed that year. In 1988 CNN aired 133 live interviews. The four-network total in 1988 was 305 live interviews.

Some caution must be taken in direct comparisons of CNN, which provided gavel-to-gavel coverage, and the other three networks, which began their programming at 9 p.m. EDT each convention session night and hoped to air only two hours of convention proceedings each evening. The larger number of interviews aired on CNN is largely attributable to the longer air-time.

In fact, one study of the 1988 Democratic Convention concluded CNN's pattern of coverage changed from the time each day when it was on the air alone to when it was on the air head-to-head with the other three networks.[7]

Race and Sex as Variables. The Republican Convention in New Orleans' Superdome was decidedly white (95% of all delegates)[8] and upwardly mobile (75% were professionals or management),[9] and network television, in its live interviews, reflected the racial makeup of the convention. CBS and NBC each interviewed only one black source all week; ABC interviewed four blacks; and CNN interviewed five black sources for a total of 11 black sources of the 305 live interviews. (See Table 1)

Those totals for black sources were under 2% for both CBS and NBC, 3.8% for CNN, and 8.7% for ABC. (See Table 2)

Women were not often interviewed. ABC interviewed four white females, CBS 13 white females, and NBC 13 white females and no black females. None of those network interviewd a black female.

Table 1

Frequency of Network Live Interviews

Conducted During the 1988 Republican Convention

Column	1	2	3	4	
	Sources				
Network	White		Black		Totals
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
ABC	38	4	4	0	46
CBS	44	13	1	0	58
NBC	55	12	1	0	68
CNN	106	22	4	1	133
Totals	243	51	10	1	305

Statistical analysis:

Race as Variable:

$X^2 = 4.919393$; 3 d.f.; NSD

Two columns (columns 1 + 2 combined v. columns 3 + 4 combined), four rows (one for each network created 2x4 grid.

Table 1 continued

Sex as Variable:

X^2 = 3.472783; 3 d.f.; NSD

Two columns (columns 1 + 3 combined v. columns 3 + 4 combined), four rows (one for each network created 2x4 grid.

Table 2

Frequency of Network Live Interviews Conducted

During the 1988 Republican Convention, by Percentage

Network	Sources				Totals
	----White----		----Black----		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
ABC	82.6	8.7	8.7	0.0	100.0
CBS	75.9	22.4	1.7	0.0	100.0
NBC	80.9	17.6	1.5	0.0	100.0
CNN	79.7	16.5	3.0	0.8	100.0
Totals	79.7	16.7	3.3	0.3	100.0

CNN did interview one black female and 22 white females, as well.

Rank-Order. Rank ordering the four categories, white male and female and black male and female, revealed ABC had the highest total for black sources (8.7%), but the lowest for females (8.7%); CBS had the highest percentage of female news sources (22.4%) but the lowest percentage for blacks (1.7%). (See Table 3).

CNN was at the all-network average of 3.6% for percentage of blacks (3.8) and at the 17.0%-four-network average for female participation (17.3). NBC was very near the network average for percetnage female news sources (17.6%).

Different Sources. Of all the 163 different live interview sources seen on network television during the convention, 40.5% of them were seen exclusively on CNN. (See Table 4) Only 4.9% -- eight sources in all -- were seen on all four networks. Those eight were Bush campaign managers Lee Atwater and James Baker, Bush family members Barbara and George Bush Jr., vice presidential nominee Dan Quayle, U.S. senators Pete Domenici and Alan Simpson, and California Governor George Deukmajian.

A viewer who saw all of ABC's coverage would have seen 13.5% of the 163 different sources; a CBS viewer would have seen 28.2%; an NBC viewer, 36.2%; and a CNN viewer, 62.0% of the different sources. (See Table 5)

Those sources who were interviewed repeatedly by the networks represented a large percentage of the total interviews conducted.

Bush Campaign Manager Lee Atwater was the source of a live interview 13 times during the convention sessions, of which there

Table 3

Rank Order of Race and Sex Categories of Live Interview Sources, By Network

Network	White		Black	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
ABC	4	4	1	3
CBS	3	2	2.5	3
NBC	2	3	2.5	3
CNN	1	1	1	1

Table 4

Different News Sources Seen During 1988 Republican Nominating Convention Live Television Interviews

	For All Four Networks		ABC, CBS and NBC Only	
Category	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
ABC Only	8	4.9	12	12.4
CBS Only	19	11.6	25	25.8
NBC Only	24	14.7	35	36.1
CNN Only	66	40.5	--	--
ABC + CBS	0	0.0	1	1.1
ABC + NBC	0	0.0	4	4.1
ABC + CNN	4	2.5	--	--
CBS + NBC	4	2.5	11	11.3
CBS + CNN	6	3.7	--	--
NBC + CNN	11	6.7	--	--
ABC, CBS + NBC	1	0.6	9	9.3
ABC, NBC + CNN	4	2.5	--	--
CBS, NBC + CNN	7	4.3	--	--
ABC, CBS + CNN	1	0.6	--	--
All 4 Networks	8	4.9	--	--
Totals	163	100.0	97	100.0

Note: A "different" source may have appeared in more than one interview on a single network; a source who was interviewed twice on ABC and once on CBS would be counted as a single different source on each network.

Table 5

Percentages and Frequencies of Any News Sources, Exclusive or Shared, Seen Live On Network Television During the 1988 Republican Convention

Network	Different Sources	Interviews	Percentages for Four Nets	Pct. for 3 Nets Only
ABC	26	46	13.5	26.9
CBS	46	56	28.2	47.5
NBC	59	69	36.2	60.8
CNN	107	133	62.0	--

were six (day sessions on Monday and Tuesday and four night sessions).

The most unusual interview of the week involved Atwater. During an interview Monday with CNN's Gene Randall, Atwater telephoned Bush in the candidate's hotel suite to ask the question, when do "we" announce the vice presidential choice? NBC quickly got into the phone call, while Barry Goldwater was being interviewed by ABC and Bruce Morton was airing a report on CBS.

NBC joined in the Bush-Atwater phone call interview, which included some conversation between U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas and Bush. Finally, ABC's Sam Donaldson joined the only all-four network live interview of the convention.

The response from Bush to the question of when would the vice presidential nominee's name be revealed was repeated by Atwater: Not until Thursday, as originally planned. In fact, Bush revealed Quayle as his choice at mid-day Tuesday during a riverfront speech in New Orleans' French Quarter that coincided with his arrival in the city.

Former Treasury Secretary James Baker, who was scheduled to take control of the Bush presidential campaign as soon as the nomination was official, was interviewed nine times by the networks.

In addition to Atwater, who was interviewed 13 times on all networks, seven other persons were interviewed by ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN. Bob Dole (eight), Alan Simpson (seven) and Pete Domenici (six), three senators whose names were on the short list for vice president, were inteviewed repeatedly, as were eventual

vice presidential nominee Dan Quayle (five), U.S. Rep. Jack Kemp (four) and members of the Bush family: wife Barbara (five), son George Jr. (five), son Neil (three), daughter Doro (two) and others (five).

Six interviews were conducted with sources who were never identified on camera; all of those were aired by CBS.

Democratic vice presidential candidate Lloyd Bentsen was interviewed four times from remote locations about his reaction to the GOP proceedings.

By Night. Examination of frequency of interviews conducted by night of the convention revealed that both CBS and NBC maintained relatively constant use of the interview during the week. (See Table 6)

ABC dipped to only two live interviews on Thursday evening when nominees George Bush and Dan Quayle made their acceptance speeches, although CBS (13) and NBC (12) managed considerably more live interviews during the same amount of air-time.

Status as Variable: Significant percentages of each network's interviews involved elected officials who were not candidates. On ABC, CBS, and NBC, the highest-ranked of the 12 status categories was Members of Congress; it was second ranked on CNN. Percentages of live interviews devoted congressmen and senators were 23.9 on ABC, 19.0 on CBS, 23.5 on NBC, and 18.0 on CNN. (See Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10)

The Rank-and-file delegates category was first on CNN (28.6%), but was third on NBC (16.2%), tied for fifth on CBS (8.6%), and tied for seventh on ABC (4.4%).

The professional staff and campaign managers category (S) was

Table 6

1988 GOP Live Interviews Conducted on Each Network,

by Convention Session Night

	By Night				
Network	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Totals
ABC	13	12	19	2	46
CBS	11	16	18	13	58
CNN	49	47	22	15	133
NBC	18	20	18	12	68

Table 7

Status of News Sources Interviewed Live During 1988 Republican Convention by Television Networks, by Frequency of Appearance

Column	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Delegates	Elected Officials		Candidates and Their Families			------All Others-----						Totals
Row	D	E	O	P	V	F	H	S	C	A	L	X	
ABC	2	1	11	3	2	7	1	10	0	3	0	6	46
CBS	5	10	11	2	2	8	2	10	0	3	0	5	58
NBC	11	6	16	3	1	6	4	13	1	0	1	6	68
CNN	38	16	24	8	2	9	4	16	3	5	0	8	133
Totals	56	33	62	16	7	30	11	49	4	11	1	25	305

$X^2 = 23.23302$; $p<.01$; 9 d.f.

Table 8

Status of News Sources Interviewed Live During 1988 Republican Convention by Television Networks, by Percentage

Column	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Delegates	Elected Officials		Candidates and Their Families			------All Others-----						Totals
Row	D	E	O	P	V	F	H	S	C	A	L	X	
ABC	4.4	2.2	23.9	6.5	4.4	15.2	2.2	21.7	0	6.5	0	13.0	100.0
CBS	8.6	17.2	19.0	3.4	3.4	13.8	3.4	17.2	0	5.2	0	8.6	100.1
NBC	16.2	8.8	23.5	4.4	1.5	8.8	5.9	19.1	1.5	0	1.5	8.8	100.0
CNN	28.6	12.0	18.0	6.0	1.5	6.8	3.0	12.0	2.3	3.8	0	6.0	100.0
Totals	18.4	10.8	46.6	5.2	2.3	9.8	3.6	16.1	1.3	3.6	0.3	2.6	100.0

Table 9

Status of Different News Sources Interviewed Live During 1988 Republican Convention by Television Networks, by Frequency of Appearance

Column	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Delegates	Elected Officials		Candidates and Their Families			------All Others-----						Totals
Row	D	E	O	P	V	F	H	S	C	A	L	X	
ABC	2	3	6	1	1	4	1	3	0	2	0	3	26
CBS	3	8	10	1	1	7	2	7	0	2	0	4	45
NBC	9	5	15	1	1	5	4	10	1	0	1	6	58
CNN	34	12	21	2	1	7	4	10	2	4	0	10	107
Totals	48	28	52	5	4	23	11	30	3	8	1	23	236

Table 10

Rank Order of News Source Live Interview Status Categories During 1988 Republican Convention by Television Networks

Column	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Delegates	Elected Officials		Candidates and Their Families			------All Others-----						Totals
Row	D	E	O	P	V	F	H	S	C	A	L	X	
ABC	7.5	9.5	1	5.5	9.5	3	9.5	2	11	5.5	12	4	
CBS	5.5	2.5	1	9	9	4	9	2.5	11	7	12	5.5	
NBC	3	5	1	8	10	5	7	2	10	12	10	5	
CNN	1	3.5	2	6.5	11	5	9	3.5	10	8	12	6.5	
Totals	2	4	1	7	10	5	8.5	3	11	8.5	12	6	

Rank-Order Correlation Coefficients:

Four-network average:		vs. ABC = .69		vs. CBS = .92	
		vs. NBC = .91		vs. CNN = .98	
ABC vs. CBS = .79	ABC vs. NBC = .67		ABC vs. CNN = .69		
CBS vs. NBC = .80	CBS vs. CNN = .88		NBC vs. CNN = .86		

uniformly highly rated on all four networks, suggesting a highly organized and orchestrated convention. Campaign staff was the second-ranked category on ABC (21.7%) and NBC (19.1%), tied for second on CBS (17.2%), and tied for third on CNN 12.0%).

Judy Milestone, who booked interview sources for the CNN anchor booth, said there were a lot of "lates" for scheduled interviews, which was very unusual, because Republicans are usually prompt. She attributed many of the scheduling conflicts and delays to middlemen who were managing newsworthy sources.

In addition to the relative uniform ranking of both Members of Congress and Staff categories on all four networks, there was high correlation for the Family member category (third, fourth, fifth, and fifth), Vice Presidential Candidate category (ninth, tie for ninth, 10th, 11th), Convention officials (two 10ths, two 11ths), and Labor leaders (10th, three 12ths).

The largest separation in categories was with Advocates -- those individuals who were not delegates or office holders, but had well-enunciated and biased points of view on a certain issue. The Advocates category was tied for 5th on ABC, seventh on CBS, and eighth on CNN; it was 12th and last on NBC 12th.

Observations. The networks did watch what each other during the convention. In CNN's newsroom on the convention floor three tv monitors were rigged in quad-split configurations so each was showing all four networks' signals at once.

CNN Gatekeeper Study. Faced with collecting data after-the-fact from reporters about which sources they deemed worthwhile who did not get on the air, the study was only partially successful.

Because reporters only occasionally visited the newsroom

where the researcher was stationed, some information was collected a few hours or a few days late. Becase reporters returned to a ready-room to drop off wireless microphones and dispersed quickly at the close of the convention, information on the last night's session was not collected.

Correspondence addressed to them a few weeks after the convention was apparently not forwarded at CNN and a subsequent attempt to gather information by talking to the reporters resulted in few memories of the specifics of that night.

Generally, the four floor reporters and one podium correspondent reported they had success in getting air-time for news sources they had selected and pitched to the control-booth trailer outside the Superdome.

Table 11 reflects principal CNN reporters' live interview frequencies and the frequencies (in parentheses) of interviews they attempted to get on the air, but were unsuccessful.

Charles Bierbauer, assigned to the podium, reported a different situation from floor reporters and a different situation from other conventions: There were no "grab" (impromptu) interviews adjacent to the podium; a network correspondent at the GOP convention needed to book a source in advance, even when the source appeared to be available while walking off the podium following a speech.

During the Tuesday day session Georgia Rep. Newt Gingrich was scheduled by Bierbauer and bumped because Republican National Chairman Frank Farenkopf was speaking on the podium and was covered by CNN.

During the Tuesday night session an interview with former

U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick was taped because the time available to talk to her coincided with an on-going booth interview with U.S. Sen. Bob Dole, Bierbauer said.

Floor reporter Tom Mintier reported one of his interviews during Monday's daytime Session 1 was cut short because of a cut to a Bob Dole interview. During the Monday night session Mintier said he had pitched an interview with Nevada Sen. Paul Laxalt; it took 90 minutes before the interview was called for by the booth, Mintier said. During the Tuesday night session Mintier said he had an interview bumped with a West Virginia couple, one a supporter of Jack Kemp, one of Kirkpatrick.

"I think they've been very selective on floor, even versus Atlanta," Mintier said. At Democratic convention, the major political figures are in the delegation; "they are harder to get to here," he said.

Wednesday night, because of the lengthy presidential roll call ballot, his interview with Bush daughter Doro, scheduled after Florida cast its votes, was bumped for a commercial. Mintier said another interview he pitched, one with former Delaware Governor Pierre DuPont, did not air that night.

The first interview reporter Gene Randall pitched that failed to reach the air occurred during Tuesday's day session (Session 3) when U.S. Rep. Newt Gingrich of Georgia lost out to an extended discussion of the platform.

Tuesday night (Session 4) Randall pitched Jack Kemp and fund raiser Richard Viguerre; neither interview aired. He also talked with campaign strategists Tom Roth and Ed Rollins, who, according to Randall, would have both said Dan Quayle would be no help at

all in November. Wednesday night South Carolina Gov. Carroll Campbell was pitched, but did not make the air.

A black woman was pitched by reporter Frank Sesno Monday morning but failed to make the air; Sesno said she followed an interview with an Hispanic who was interviewed about minority issues.

Sesno said he had eventual vice presidential nominee Dan Quayle lined up for the Monday night session, but the booth had no time for him in the middle of a speech carried from the podium. Eighteen hours later the former darkhorse vp candidate was in great demand.

Mary Tillotson reported getting all of the interview sources she pitched on for the first three sessions.

Hypothesis Testing.

Research Question 1: An examination of the population of interviews conducted in 1984 by ABC, CBS, and NBC (131) and the population of interviews aired from the 1988 GOP convention (172) indicated that the networks had aired more interviews in 1988. CNN aired 134 interviews during 1988; its broadcasts were not analyzed in 1984.

Research Question 2: Chi Square testing of data listed in Table 1 indicated no significant difference between reported frequencies of interviews aired on the four networks in 1988 as to sex of the news source.

Frequencies in Table 1 were subjected to a Chi Square test as to the race of news sources; there was no significant difference between network totals (X^2 = .71; 3 d.f.).

A Chi Square test was run on data reported in Table 7 as to

status of news sources; there was a siginficant difference in frequencies of each network at the .01 level. (X^2 = 23.23302; $p < .01$; 9 d.f.).

Research Question 3: The third question was answered qualitatively. CNN reporters said they had good success in getting sources they deemed newsworthy on the air.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, statistical analysis indicated the networks did not act significantly different in selection of sources for live interviews by either the race or sex of the news source; however, they did act differently as to selection of sources based on their status ($p < .01$.; 9 d.f.).

The similarity in selection patterns according to race and sex of news sources is likely due to the relative homogeneous makeup of a Republican convention. Most delegates are male, absent the mandated quotas for female delegates found at Democratic conventions, and 95% of all delegates were white.

The larger differences seen in the status of news sources could be due to a number of factors. Congresspersons and senators were the largest percentages of sources on all networks but CNN, where they were second only to Rank-and-file delegates as a group.

CNN was the only network to broadcast the daytime sessions on Monday and Tuesday and began its evening broadcasts two to three hours earlier each day than the ABC, CBS, and NBC. Well-known elected officials were not as readily available on the convention floor during the daytime sessions or in the early

evening hours; hence, CNN may have had little choice but to fill in with unknown rank-and-file delegates and others.

Delegates were CNN's top category of sources, but they did not fare as well on the other networks: they were third on NBC, tied for fifth on CBS, and tied for seventh on ABC.

Another status classification of news sources that accounted for substantial numbers of live interviews was that of Campaign Staff member. That category ranked second on all networks except CNN, where it was third. The trend toward more interviews with professional staff members appears to be on the rise, possibly because campaigns are "managed" more than they once were. The opportunity for the press to view an unguarded moment of the candidate or among staffers seems to have completely vanished. In fact, convention interviews with the presidential candidates themselves have been diminishing over the past two or three election years.

CNN floor reporters who participated in a gatekeeper study reported they had good success in getting sources on the air they deemed to be newsworhy. Interruptions for commercials and a convention program that fell behind schedule were more likely to be the reasons why a selected source did not appear on the air, rather than a director in the booth deciding someone was not worth the air-time after a reporter had selected him.

Further research: An expansion of the gatekeeper aspect of this study for 1992 would be of tremendous benefit to better determine the role of the networks' convention directors and news operations as a whole. Pressured by lengthy live broadcast segments and feverish competition with the rival networks, who

does not get on the air often is a reflection of what the competition is doing at the same time.

A working relationship with each network and access to their control trailers or access to a headset carrying the trailer's intercom signal would significantly aid in accurate and complete collection of necessary data. Examination of interviews that were aired by convention session may also expose sub-patterns in network selection processes.

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ENDNOTES

1 Gordon Gray's dissertation about the 1952 conventions, although qualitative, was the pioneer study in the field. Gray, Gordon L. (1957), "Television and the National Nominating Conventions of 1952," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University; Womack, David L. "Live ABC, CBS, and NBC Interviews During Three Democratic Conventions," Journalism Quarterly, 62:838-844 (Winter 1985); Womack, (1986), "ABC, CBS, and NBC Live Interview Coverage During the Democratic National Conventions of 1972, 1976, and 1984: A Content Analysis," unpublished dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi; Womack, "Black Participation in 1984 Democratic Convention Live Network Television Interviews," Howard Journal of Communication, in press, Winter 1988.

2 Womack, "ABC, CBS, and NBC Live Interview Coverage During the Democratic National Conventions of 1972, 1976, and 1984: A Content Analysis;" Womack, "Treatment of Candidates in Convention Floor Interviews," Journalism Quarterly, 58:300-302 (Summer 1981).

3 Womack, "Live TV Interviews At 1984 GOP Convention," Journalism Quarterly, 65:1006-1009 (Winter 1988).

4 Gray's study of the 1952 conventions was qualitative; Foote and Rimmer's quantitative study dealt only with Tuesday night coverage of both 1980 conventions. Foote, Joe & Tony Rimmer, "The Ritual of Convention Coverage in 1980," in W.C. Adams, ed., Television Coverage of the 1980 Presidential Campaign

(Media Coverage of Public Affairs, Vol. 3, Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1983), pp. 69-88.

5 Womack, "Live TV Interviews At 1984 GOP Convention."

6 Womack, "Status of News Sources Interviewed During Presidential Conventions," Journalism Quarterly, 63:331-336 (Summer 1986).

7 Womack, "Live Television Interviews at the 1988 Democratic Convention," Journalism Quarterly, in press, Autumn 1989.

8 "The right tv party comes at a price for many delegates," The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune, Aug. 15, 1989, p. B-1.

9 Ibid.